

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2021-0097

HLC DATE: May 24, 2021

PC DATE: June 22, 2021

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission

OWNERS: Erika W. and Patrick F. Brosnan

HISTORIC NAME: Posey House

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 1304 Bob Harrison Street

ZONING CHANGE: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from family residence – neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) to family residence – historic landmark – neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION: Architecture and historical associations

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: April 26, 2021: Initiate historic zoning with the consent of the owners on a motion by Koch, Larosche seconding. Vote: 9-0, Heimsath and Castillo absent. May 24, 2021: Recommend the proposed zoning change from family residence – neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) to family residence – historic landmark – neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning on a motion by Koch, McWhorter seconding, with amendment by Heimsath. Vote: 9-0, Castillo and Featherston absent.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommend the proposed zoning change from family residence – neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) to family residence – historic landmark – neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning on a motion by Commissioner Cox, seconding. Commissioner Shieh Vote: 12-0 Commissioner Praxis off the dais.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The house was recommended as a contributing property in a potential historic district by the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016).

CITY COUNCIL DATE: July 29, 2021

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Cara Bertron

PHONE: 512-974-1446

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS: Austin Independent School District, Austin Lost and Found Pets, Austin Neighborhoods Council, Bike Austin, Del Valle Community Coalition, East Austin Conservancy, Friends of Austin Neighborhoods, Homeless Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation, Neighbors United for Progress, Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods, Preservation Austin, SELTexas, Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group, Swede Hill Neighborhood Association

### BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

**Architecture:** The Posey House, built around 1924 by Samuel Posey, is significant as a modest example of the National Folk style, a property type that is rapidly being replaced by new construction across East Austin. The one-story house is clad in board and batten wood siding and capped with a pyramidal roof with two pipe chimneys and exposed rafter tails. Features include non-original vinyl-sash windows and a non-original flush wood door, which are proposed to be replaced with 2-over-2 double-hung clad-wood windows and a wood door in keeping with the original construction date. A partial-width entry porch has a shed roof covered in corrugated metal and supported by square columns.

**Historical Associations:** The Posey House is significant for its association with Samuel Posey and his descendants, working-class African Americans who purchased and maintained the property for decades at a time when few financial, policy, and legal resources were available to Black families. At least two generations of the Posey family lived in the house for more than 45 years, until at least 1969. The family sold the house in 1998 after 75 years of ownership. Samuel, Eva, and Eddie Posey had menial occupations that were typical of the jobs available to African Americans at the time: laborer, domestic worker, shoe shiner. Though Eddie Posey attended college and business school, he chose shoeshining for the reliable income, highlighting the limited opportunities available to even well-educated Blacks. Like other members of the African American community, Eddie Posey held highly respected positions within local organizations—a Mason, a trustee in Wesley Methodist Church, and vice president of HT's local alumni chapter—even as he interacted with the predominantly white world of the Capitol in a service job. The Poseys represent an example of a group of people in early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Austin who established themselves in a comfortable home and redefined success for their family within the constraints of a racially segregated society.

Samuel and Clara Posey built their home at 1304 Bob Harrison Street between 1922 and 1924, replacing two small rental houses on the same lot. Samuel Smith Posey was born in 1860 in Texas, where his father worked as a field laborer. Samuel Posey also worked as a laborer for the Austin Gas Light Co. (1909), then later as a stacker for the Kuntz-Sternenberg Lumber Co. (1920s). He married Jennie Stamps in 1893, and the couple had at least six children. In 1900, the family was living with two lodgers in a house they owned at 502 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street (redeveloped after 1965 into a Capitol parking garage). Jennie died in 1905 of Bright's disease (nephritis). Samuel may have remarried a woman named Lizzie or Clara (or Sarah); Census records and city directories provide conflicting information. He moved into 1304 Bob Harrison by 1924. In 1940, he was living in the house with three lodgers and a child. Samuel Posey died in 1941 in Austin.

Two of Samuel Posey's grown children, Eva and Eddie, occupied the house from around 1947 until 1969, moving from the house where they had grown up on E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Eva (or Eve) Lee Posey was born in 1898 and Eddie Posey was born in 1905, and both lived in Austin their entire lives. Ms. Posey worked in private family homes as a cook (1920) and a servant (1930 and 1940). She lived with her father, then her brother Leon and his family, on E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street before moving to 1304 Bob Harrison to live with Eddie. Eva Posey died in 1968.

Eddie Posey graduated from Huston-Tillotson College, later serving as vice president of the local alumni chapter. He shined shoes at the Capitol beginning when he was 10 years old, working through college to pay tuition, and continuing after he graduated. By 1950, he had been named "official shine boy." That year, a newspaper profile of Mr. Posey was headlined "College Grad Shines Shoes." Mr. Posey's only other jobs had been one-year stints at the Avenue Hotel and as principal of a school in Lavaca County. East Austin historian Arlene Youngblood noted that service industry jobs such as shoe shining came with tips. Mr. Posey said that the Great Depression did not impact his income, and that he "made an honest living shining shoes—enough to take care of [his] sister and [himself] comfortably."

Still, a few years later, Mr. Posey attended People's Business College, a business school for African Americans seeking to gain skills in shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping. Community leader E. Marie Gilbert established the college in 1947 to "open doors and [provide] stepping stones to what [students] want[ed]." Located at E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Navasota streets, the college operated until 1961 as a more inclusive counterpart to contemporary business schools for white Austinites. Ms. Gilbert had previously started the business department at Texas Southern University, a historically Black university in Houston. Mr. Posey was one of five "outstanding citizens" honored at the People's Business College 1955 graduation. He was active in community life as a Mason and a trustee in Wesley Methodist Church. Eddie Posey died in 1969.

PARCEL NO.: 0209070402

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: E 46' OF LOT 2 BLK 8 OLT 38 DIV B OREILLY JAMES

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$4,152 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$45; county portion: \$46; AISD portion: \$3,228. This estimate is based on the homestead values of the property.

APPRAISED VALUE: \$426,090 (homestead; total value is \$582,383)

PRESENT USE: Single-family residence with ADU in rear

CONDITION: Good

PRESENT OWNERS:

Erika W. and Patrick F. Brosnan  
1304 Bob Harrison Street  
Austin, TX 78702-1136

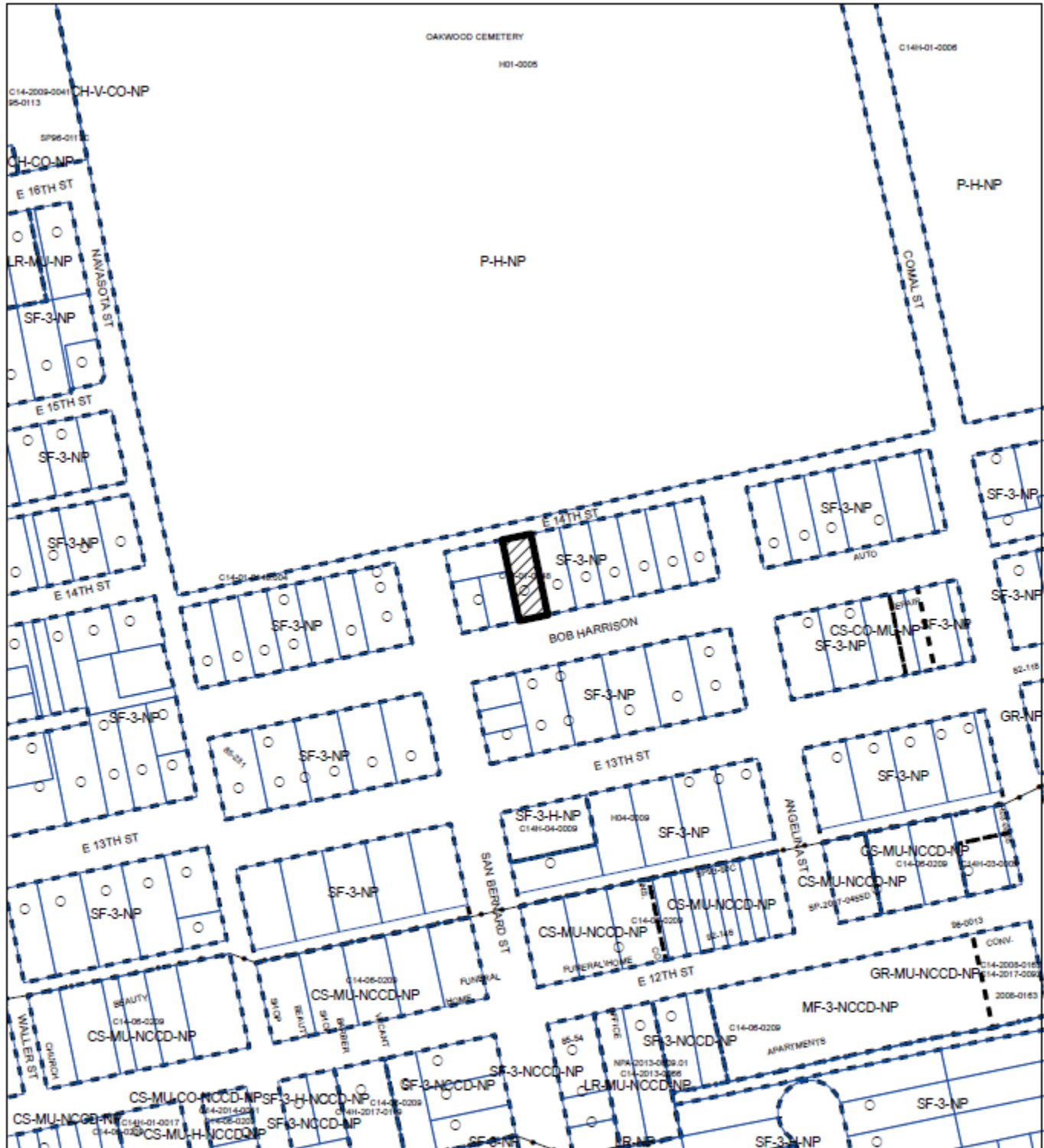
DATE BUILT: ca. 1924

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: Rear and side additions constructed after 1962

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Samuel Posey (ca. 1924-1941) and descendants (1941-98)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None

# LOCATION MAP



## HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2021-0097



SUBJECT TRACT



PENDING CASE



ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 200'

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:



**HE MAKES 'EM SHINE**—A pleased customer gets a shine from smiling Eddie Posey, who has polished the shoes of state officials and visitors to the Texas Capitol since 1915.—(Neal Douglass Photo).

## College Grad Shines Shoes

**EDDIE POSEY** HOLDS an AB degree from Samuel Huston College, but he still works at a job he learned as a 10-year-old. Posey is official shoe shine boy at the state capitol, and says he wouldn't trade jobs with anyone in the world.

The 45-year-old man began his life's work as helper to his brother, Leon. Equipped with a box, shine rags and liquid polish and paste, little Eddie went with the older boy to the capitol, which was just five blocks from their home at 502 East 13th Street. He was shy and excited, but managed to get through

serves all departments in the building but spends most of his time in offices of the governor, comptroller and attorney general.

One of the things in the capitol which interests Posey most is a Bible left in the governor's office by Pat Neff. Gov. Neff wrote his favorite verse of scripture in the Bible when his term expired and started a precedent. Each chief executive since that time has written his favorite verse in the book upon leaving office.

**POSEY THINKS THAT** the mirror hanging on the wall in the governor's reception office is another

"College Grad Shines Shoes," Austin American-Statesman 4/7/1950. (Con't next page)

the first day without being scolded too severely for getting polish on the cuffs of his customers' trousers.

The young boy was proud to show his first wages to his parents, Samuel and Jennie Posey. He had shined 25 pairs of shoes to earn the \$1.25 that jingled in his pockets. The price of a shine was five cents back in 1915. Now Posey gets 15 cents for a shine, and sometimes his customers give him 20 or 25 cents. He charges 25 cents for shining the bottoms of boots, 50 cents for shining boots with plain tops, and 65 cents for shining boots with decorated tops.

**THE LARGEST SUM OF** money that Posey ever made in a single day was \$45 on the occasion of Governor James E. Ferguson's second inauguration in 1917. He worked from eight a. m. that day until three a. m. the next day shining the shoes of people who were attending inaugural ceremonies at the capitol.

Easy money came in quickly at the inaugural ball that night. The men had patent leather footwear and Posey did nothing more than give each pair of shoes a rub off.

Highest pay he has ever received for shining a single pair of shoes was \$1.50. Posey doesn't know the name of the man who gave him the money, but remembers that he was a Democrat and the editor of an Eastern newspaper.

Posey completed his elementary education at the Olive Street School and did his high school work at Anderson High School. He received his college degree in 1931. During all those years he shined shoes at the capitol, earning enough to pay for his education.

Thirty-three years of Posey's life have been spent at the capitol keeping the shoes of state employees glistening. He was absent from his shining post one year when he worked at the Avenue Hotel, and another year when he served as principal of the Eilers Industrial School in Lavaca County.

But Posey didn't like teaching, so he returned to the capitol and took over his duties as shoe shine boy again. Since 1935 he has been the only person to polish shoes within the capitol building, and he is now official shine boy there. He

of the most interesting items in the capitol. It is supposed to be one of the two perfect mirrors in existence and was given to the governor's office by Queen Victoria of England. The queen gave the other perfect mirror to be placed in the national capitol.

In remembering the years he has lived in Austin, Posey says that the flood of 1915 made a lasting impression on him. The old Gregg house, next door to his father's home, was washed away during the deluge. The Gregg house hit the Posey residence and knocked it off its blocks at about two a. m. Young Eddie and his family had to climb out a tall window to save themselves.

All residents of the Gregg house were saved except one man who was warned not to go into the house, but refused to listen and entered through the back door where the water was low. He was swept away with the old home and was drowned.

"This flood washed away the foot bridge on East 13th Street," said Eddie. "They never built that bridge back, although they replaced the foot bridges on 12th Street and 14th Street."

The depression did not affect Posey's income. He explains this by saying, "Depressions don't affect the shoe shining business, because shoeshines are not a costly commodity like food, clothing, house rent, utilities and other necessities of life. Well-groomed people will always regard shoeshines as essential."

Posey plans to spend the rest of his life shining shoes because he enjoys the work and can think of nothing he would rather do.

"Well, I tell you that I make an honest living shining shoes—enough to take care of my sister and myself comfortably," he says. "I guess I'll be the official shine boy at the capitol the rest of my life."

"You see, my customers are all nice and congenial people and bring me a lot of happiness and joy. I'm used to them. The capitol is near the old homestead where I spent 39 years of my life, and I feel at home in the neighborhood. I'd be real lonely if I couldn't make my rounds at the capitol each day, talk with friends, and pass by the spot where I used to live."



# Business College Graduation Slated

Five outstanding citizens will be honored Sunday at 3 p. m. at graduation exercises for 41 students of People Business College.

Services are scheduled at Simpson Methodist Church, 1701 East 12th Street, and Dr. M. S. Davage, president of Huston-Tillotson College, will deliver the commencement address.

Four Austinites and a Houston woman will receive distinguished service awards from the college

at its eighth annual commencement.

Being honored are Mrs. Harold J. Plass of 4518 Highland Terrace, Miss Bobbie J. Harrold of 705 Delmar, John W. Whitley of 1169 San Bernard, Eddie Posey of 1304 Bob Harrison—all of Austin—and Mrs. Erma Jewell Hughes of Houston.

Whitley is owner of Ten Talent Shop, 1169 San Bernard, which specializes in wood and metal work of both artistic and functional design. Whitley founded the shop after a varied and colorful career which began after studying at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute when Booker T. Washington, its founder, was still its president. He studied the machinist trade and learned the function of each type machine commonly known at that time.

His career as a machinist was interrupted by service in the first world war, and afterward he became a builder and subsequently an employe of the Bradford Paint Company, where he served for 27 years handling incoming and outgoing merchandise. He trained most of the picture framers who came to work in the shop, and also served as a salesman for the company. He has always encouraged young people to study.

He is one of the founders of the Olivet Baptist Church and is chairman of its deacon and trustee boards and its finance committee and has held various local and state church offices. He is a member of the board of the local NAACP and a member of the Travis County Voters League.

Mrs. Plass is past president of

the All-Austin Nursery, an interracial nursery at 801½ East 13th Street.

Miss Harrold has done outstanding work in the P.T.A., Order of Eastern Star and David Chapel Baptist Church.

Posey is a graduate of Huston-Tillotson College, vice president of the local alumni chapter, a Mason and a trustee in Wesley Methodist Church.

Mrs. Hughes is founder of a Houston business college and is a nurse, world traveler, youth worker and teacher.

Eleven honor students also will be presented during the ceremony.

J. T. King, professor at Huston-Tillotson, will introduce Dr. Davage. Also on the program will be Misses Annie Watson and Elizabeth Pearson and Mrs. Clara Watkins.

A reception will follow at the business college, 1110 East Twelfth Street.

**EDDIE POSEY**

Funeral for Eddie Posey of 1304 Bob Harrison will be Tuesday at 3 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, with Rev. J. H. Carruthers officiating.

Survivors include a brother, Leon G. Posey of Los Angeles, Calif.

Burial will be in Evergreen Cemetery under direction of Eunice Funeral Home of Seguin.

*Death announcement for Eddie Posey, The Austin Statesman, 7/13/1969*



*Photograph of Eva Posey, n.d. Source: findagrave.com, added by Summer Owens*





### Leon George Posey

Leon George Posey was born to Samuel and Jennie Stamps Posey July 29, 1902, in Austin, Texas.

Leon was the fifth child of ten children. His siblings were: Samuel Smith, Jr. Posey, Henry Fletcher Posey, Charlotte Posey McKinney, Eve Posey, Eddie Posey, and triplets, Faith, Hope and Charity. All of his immediate family preceded him in death.

Deacon Posey attended the Old Anderson High School in Austin, and furthered his education by attending Samuel Huston and Tillotson Colleges.

Deacon Posey was saved in Church of God In Christ #1 in 1920 under the leadership of Elder F.C.V. Ford and baptized in the Colorado River.

He was a great historian, loyal and devoted leader, Church Trustee and prominent member of the Deacon Board.

He married Leona Johnson Posey, and from this union two children were born, Ruth Green of San Antonio, and Odie Posey of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He later married Cora Lee McIntyre Posey and enjoyed a devoted 56 years of love. His wife, Cora, preceded him in death in May of 1993. There were no children born to this union. However, together they raised a niece, Linda Carol Dukes Williams.

Deacon Posey was retired, but continued to exercise (work) at Hancock Barber Shop in Hancock Shopping Center until about a year prior to his death.

He is survived by his daughter, Ruth Green, and her husband Sylvester Green; his son, Odie Posey, his second daughter as he referred to her, Willie Bell Dukes Harden, four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and one great-great-granddaughter; his niece, Linda Carol Dukes Williams and family, and numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Services will be Tuesday, January 26, 1999, at 2:00 p.m. at the Mims Chapel Church of God In Christ. Burial will be at Evergreen Cemetery. Wake services will be Monday, January 25, 1999, at 6:00 p.m. at the Alice Taylor King Chapel.

Services Entrusted to King-Tears Mortuary, Inc., (512) 476-9128.

*Obituary for Leon George Posey, Austin American-Statesman 1/24/1999.*